



## Delegated Action of the Executive Director

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Relocation of Historic Watchbox</b> Washington Navy Yard Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 7628  <b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 41.11(61.10)44048
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States Department of the Navy	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b> Preliminary and final approval of site and building plans  <b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

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The Navy has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the relocation of a historic watchbox from Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Maryland to the Washington Navy Yard. The project is mitigation for the adverse effect caused by the demolition of Piers 3 and 4 at the Washington Navy Yard. Piers 3 and 4 are contributing elements to the Washington Navy Yard Central Yard National Historic Landmark. As such, their demolition constitutes an adverse effect on historic properties. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Navy entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer and Maryland Historical Trust to mitigate the adverse effect. The mitigation defined in the MOA was to relocate a historic watchbox from Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Maryland to the Washington Navy Yard.

The watchbox was constructed ca. 1853-1854 at the Washington Navy Yard. It stood just inside the Latrobe Gate (8th and M Streets SE) and functioned as a sentry post manned by Marines assigned to the Washington Navy Yard. In approximately 1905, the building was moved to the Naval Proving Ground at Indian Head. The watchbox has been at three locations at Indian Head and has served as a foreman's office, telephone switchboard office, and storage building. The building is currently vacant.

The watchbox will be moved by barge from Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Maryland to the Washington Navy Yard. A firehouse stands on the building's original site, and therefore the watchbox will be reinstalled slightly south of the original site in West Leutze Park. After the building is moved, a porch will be reconstructed at its new site based on historic photographs from the time when the building was originally located at the Washington Navy Yard. In addition, interpretive signage will be added to highlight the historical significance of the building.

Pursuant to its regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Navy completed an Environmental Assessment on the demolition of the Piers 3 and 4 and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on April 12, 2012. As this is a project located in the District of Columbia, NCPC has an independent NEPA responsibility. NCPC staff has determined that approval of the project meets NCPC's categorical exclusion §8(C)(21) of the Commission's

Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures. This categorical exclusion applies to the review and approval of acquisition of occupiable space by lease acquisition, construction, or expansion, or improvement of an existing facility when specific conditions are met. These conditions include the following: 1) the structure and proposed use are in compliance with local planning and zoning and any applicable District of Columbia, state, or federal requirements; 2) the proposed use will not substantially increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility; 3) the site and scale of construction are consistent with those of existing adjacent or nearby buildings; and 4) there is no evidence of community controversy or other environmental issues. Prior to applying this categorical exclusion, NCPC staff determined that no extraordinary circumstances were present as required by the Commission's NEPA procedures.

As noted above, the Navy conducted consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) and Maryland Historical Trust regarding the demolition of Piers 3 and 4 at the Washington Navy Yard. As a result of that consultation, a MOA was executed that included mitigation to relocate the historic watchbox to the Washington Navy Yard and the proposed project fulfills the terms of that MOA. NCPC has an independent responsibility to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for approval of the project. NCPC determined that approval of the project would have no adverse effect on historic properties and the DC SHPO concurred with that finding.

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its November 12, 2014, meeting. The Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site and building plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the DC SHPO; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996 and 40 U.S.C.

§ 8722(b)(1) and (d), I approve the relocation of the historic watchbox from Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Maryland to the Washington Navy Yard.

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Marcel Acosta  
Executive Director

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